

HOUSING MANAGEMENT BULLETIN

Editorial Office

ROOM 1208 478 FOURTH AVENUE
NEW YORK, N. Y.

Editors

BEATRICE GREENFIELD ROSAHN
ABRAHAM GOLDFELD

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HOUSING OFFICIALS • 1313 EAST SIXTIETH STREET, CHICAGO

Vol. 1, No. 5

JOINT REFERENCE
LIBRARY

AUG 11 1938

July 29, 1938

MANAGEMENT TRAINING INSTITUTE HELD IN WASHINGTON

The second Management Training Institute, conducted by the National Association of Housing Officials in collaboration with federal and local housing authorities, was held in Washington, D.C., June 13-24, 1938. Mr. Abraham Goldfeld, Chairman of NAHO's Committee on Housing Management was Director of the Institute.

The Institute was officially open only to two classes of persons: a) members of public housing agencies, federal and local, who are directly responsible for the management and operation of large-scale projects; b) persons definitely selected by public agencies for important management positions in projects now under construction or definitely assured through financial contracts, or in a similarly positive way.

The address of welcome was given on Monday morning, June 13th, by Administrator Nathan Straus who expressed pleasure at having another Institute in management conducted by the National Association of Housing Officials at this crucial period in the development and extension of public housing. He stated that community life in government-financed slum clearance and low-rent housing projects is rapidly developing an understanding of social relationships that must inevitably lead to a heightening of civic consciousness and responsibility.

"Time was," said Mr. Straus, "and not so very long ago at that, when housing management was considered exclusively in the narrow terms of property maintenance, rent collection and such matters. The be-all and end-all was more profits and fewer losses for owners of real estate. And this was altogether natural and justifiable. After all, those who had invested their money in real

estate had just done so for good business reasons - they had never made any humanitarian pretensions.

"Today as a result of the program of the USHA, Housing Management is taking on broad and deep significance. The management of low-rent housing projects, conceived in terms of the United States Housing Act, is not based upon profits, but upon the development of community spirit, of human relationships. The successful manager must make his tenants feel that they are part of an integrated community, that they are dependent upon and responsible to one another, that their happiness will be a result of their own co-ordinated efforts. He must not only encourage the individual to express everything within himself, but also help him to realize that he is a vital part of the community as a whole.

"I have long been of the conviction that, within the boundaries of modern technological advancement, life in a properly managed low-rent housing project can and should have the spirit and leisure of the America of yesteryear. In our villages of the 18th century, life centered around the Village Green with its games, sports, and amusements. Group life dominated social relationships. And in every phase of activity where the evidences of mutual understanding of civic consciousness. It was out of these roots that America grew and flourished.

"It is high time that you and I - and all who would make America a happier place in which to life - join hands in an effort to restore the basis of American democracy. You and I, fortunately, are in a position to do much in this connection, for the low-rent housing project offers a splendid opportu-

THE BULLETIN WANTS NEWS, IDEAS, REPORTS AND OTHER MATERIAL ON MANAGEMENT
PLEASE SEND TWO COPIES: ONE TO NAHO, ONE TO THE BULLETIN'S EDITORIAL OFFICE

Members of Management Training Institute at Start of Field Trip

Registered were 54 housing managers, assistants and local authority directors, in addition to 12 or 15 USHA management specialists, who attended some or all of the sessions. Institute members represented 35 cities in 20 states.



First row (left to right): Mr. and Mrs. Livingston, Charleston; Mr. and Mrs. Ouren, Omaha; A. H. Doty, USHA; J. C. Green, Nashville; Fred Henderson, Chicago; Sherman Aldrich, Chicago; Abraham Goldfeld, NAHO; C. Walton, USHA; R. De Long, Chicago; Mrs. B. G. Rosahn, NAHO; W. R. Walker, Jr., Newport News; E. E. Pruitt, Louisville; J. R. Altieri, USHA.

Second row: J. L. Stephenson, Dallas (behind Mrs. Ouren); K. S. McAllister, Atlanta; J. S. Raffety, Cincinnati; H. W. Sturges, Stamford; F. X. Lane, Boston; R. W. Flood, New York City; W. F. Nabors, Memphis; Carl Bradt, Detroit; Coleman Woodbury, NAHO.

Top row: L. F. Artis, Indianapolis; J. A. Simms, Jacksonville; J. W. Johnson, Oklahoma City; Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Voigt, Milwaukee; Mr. and Mrs. B. J. Bomm, Louisville; C. H. Flagg, Alley Dwelling Authority for D.C.; A. J. Flanigan, USHA; Leon Raider, Philadelphia; J. A. Scott, Miami; H. J. Aston, Fort Worth.

ity for the re-establishment of the spirit of neighborliness, of joint effort, of civic consciousness and responsibility.

"The most modern facilities would be to no avail were it not for the intelligence, guidance and leadership of housing managers - of managers who are not interested in a project as a piece of real estate but rather as an example of a fuller kind of American city life. Those who manage the USHA-assisted projects must always remember that they are chiefly responsible for the happiness, contentment and citizenship of those who come within the scope of our program, for the happiness, the contentment and citizenship of those who live in the projects will in the last analysis, be responsible for the failure or the success of the housing program."

The first formal lecture was delivered by Mr. Bleecker Marquette, President of NAHO, who presented an informative summary of public housing history beginning with the NIRA, through the George-Healey Act up to the

United States Housing Act of 1937. Mr. Marquette described the powers of present local authorities and discussed the present status of federal projects as well as new developments. He also touched briefly upon the purposes and functions of the FHA, the HOLC, the Farm Security Administration and limited-dividend corporations.

All sessions were marked by pointed questions and direct comment on the subjects under consideration. Although many unsolved problems remain and many queries brought a variety of answers, those who attended the earlier management training course remarked upon the advance that has been made in management practice during the last two years.

The Bulletin is too short to list the discussion leaders and the high points of their sessions. A stenographic transcript was kept, however, of all the meetings. It is now being edited for publication. It should be the most useful compilation so far on the practical aspects of managing large-scale

public projects. Announcements will be made in subsequent Bulletins of its publication and distribution policy.

On Saturday, June 18th, two field trips were arranged for attendants of the Institute. More than thirty-five members boarded a chartered bus at 9:00 a.m. and visited Buckingham and Colonial Village in Maryland, two of the FHA limited-dividend developments for families of moderate income; Langston, the federal project in Washington for Negro families; and several of the low-rent enterprises of the Washington Sanitary Housing Corporation and the Alley Dwelling Authority. The tour also took in some of the worst alley dwellings, which illustrated vividly that Washington, like most of America's large cities, is in sorry need of low-rent accommodations.

During the afternoon the group visited Greenbelt in Maryland, considered by many housers as the most successful of the three greenbelt communities formerly under the Resettlement Administration and now directly managed and operated by the Farm Security Administration. The managers were much impressed by the arrangement of the buildings, the well landscaped areas and surrounding greenbelt, which, at this time of the year, present a particularly pleasing effect.

INSTITUTE POSTSCRIPTS

Speaking at the Institute's last session, Richard Voell, USHA's Acting Director of Management Review, expressed the Authority's and his personal gratitude to those who had organized and taken part in the Institute. In his opinion, annual meetings of this kind would help greatly in advancing the theory and practice of housing management. Further he urged all members of management staffs to contribute to the HOUSING MANAGEMENT BULLETIN and to give their active support to other NAHO activities undertaken in behalf of housing management.

Many Institute members commented on the keen interest shown by Administrator Straus, as well as on his clear understanding of management issues and procedure. They and many other housers will hail with joy the letter sent out on June 30th, over Mr. Straus' signature, addressed "TO ALL LOCAL HOUSING AUTHORITIES:

"The success of the low-rent public housing program will depend in the long run on the extent to which we succeed in rehousing those who live in the worst conditions, that is those in the lowest income group. In

turn, low rents depend upon the skill and ingenuity exercised in designing projects with the lowest attainable costs for operation including repairs and replacements.

"In considering these problems, the advice of persons experienced in the management problems is usually very valuable. I am writing to suggest, that, in the course of formulating your program and your projects, you may find it helpful to draw upon the suggestions and advice of your housing manager. If you have not yet engaged a housing manager, you may wish to engage one at an early stage so that his advice will be available and so that he can participate in solving the problems of planning and designing. A careful search for the best possible person will do much to assure the success of your enterprise. The ability of your housing manager will be reflected to a marked degree both in rents and in Authority overhead costs.

"When our representatives meet with you, your staff, and your architects, I would like to have them take advantage of your housing manager's advice. I have no doubt but that you are proceeding along this line, and this letter is merely to encourage you to include the best available housing management advice in the preparation of projects.

"Our management staff is also available to you at all times for suggestions and advice."

Public Relations

One of the most stimulating sessions at the Institute was that devoted to "public relations," a phase of the job of housing management which receives far less attention than it deserves. Problems in public relations begin the moment a prospective manager is interviewed for the job and it continues thereafter in every contact he makes with housing authorities, tenants, staff, interested citizens and representatives of community agencies and institutions.

One aspect of this problem did not receive attention at the Institute's session and seems sufficiently important to warrant consideration at this time. Probably no danger spot in housing harbors more potential harm than the "rejected applicants" of public housing projects. Families who have failed to gain admittance as tenants of new public projects are disappointed families who may become disgruntled citizens if they are not handled tactfully. The extent of this possible danger can be appreciated when one realizes that about eight times as many families applied for residence in one of New



Recreation in Toledo Project

Brand Whitlock Homes in Toledo has started its first summer school and supervised play program under the supervision of Miss Leonore Williams. The project is 100% rented.

York's public developments as actually were admitted. Sixteen thousand applied, less than two thousand were selected! Were the rejected applicants completely satisfied with the reasons given for their failure to become tenants? Did the explanation seem reasonable to them or were they resentful?

Obviously these questions are of utmost importance to managers as well as to the public housing movement as a whole. The columns of future issues of this Bulletin will be open for discussion of this subject by those who have had experience with it. Methods of notifying families who have not been accepted, and reasons given for rejection will be of interest. Special problems which may have arisen and ways in which they have been handled should also be related.

Other related points might be considered. Would it be useful to set up a local advisory committee of citizens in each area where there is a public project, which could be called upon to serve as a board of review in cases where rejected applicants press charges of "unfairness and partiality in tenant selection?" Should an authority compile the essential facts about applicants rejected because of too high income and make this in-

formation available without names or addresses to limited-dividend or other private housing agencies that might provide the quarters needed by this group?

So many members of NAHO's Committee on Housing Management attended the Institute that a meeting of the Committee was arranged Tuesday, June 23rd. Among the recommendations from the meeting was the establishment of a regular annual training institute. Informal discussion among Institute members showed some preference for such an Institute just before NAHO's Annual Meeting so that those attending could stay over for the big conference. Others felt, however, that this might make for too much conferring within a short period of time and suggested a separate Institute date.

DISTRIBUTION POLICY ON BULLETIN

The HOUSING MANAGEMENT BULLETIN is distributed to members of NAHO who have signified their desire to receive it for a trial period. Copies are available to non-members only by purchase of individual issues at 25c each.